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UNITED STATES EXECUTIVE ACTION ON DARFUR: MORE IS NEEDED

HON. CHARLES B. RANGEL

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2005

Mr. RANGEL. Mr. Speaker I rise today to discuss the ongoing crisis in Darfur. As many as 400,000 have died throughout the course of this crisis, and more than 10,000 continue to die each month. While the death and suffering continues, action on the part of the Administration has, in recent months, been subdued at best. A May 3, Op-Ed in the New York Times, entitled "Day 113 of the President's Silence", points out that the Administration's silence on the issue has been noticeable. This new stance is extremely perplexing considering the Administration's heavy engagement on the issue previously.

Part of that engagement involved early pressure on the Sudanese leadership to agree to a Darfur cease fire. The United States also had the distinction of being the first and only major world power to label the offenses of the Sudanese government in Darfur as genocide. The Administration was also generally supportive of the Comprehensive Peace in Sudan Act passed in late 2004, which admonished the Sudanese government for its actions in Darfur, provided humanitarian assistance for the region, and reiterated United States sanctions on Sudan.

The United States has also provided large amounts of assistance to the Darfur region, totaling some \$615 million since 2003 (\$357.6 million in FY 2005 alone). The 2005 Emergency Supplemental agreed to on Tuesday included \$50 million to strengthen the African Union peacekeeping mission in Darfur, as well as \$40 million in general humanitarian aid.

Despite the financial assistance, the Administration has been quiet on the political front recently. In fact they have seemingly backed away from referring to the crisis in Darfur as genocide, and have down played the casualty count in the region. As the New York Times Op-Ed asserts, Sudan's recent cooperation with the United States on intelligence matters, may be placating the Administration's stance towards the regime regarding Darfur.

In the most recent indication of its new stance on Darfur, the Administration came out in opposition to the Darfur Accountability Act introduced by Senator CORZINE. Among other things the act called for wide-ranging sanctions against the Sudanese government, the establishment of a special presidential envoy for Darfur, and a military no-fly zone for the region. The bill also sought to provide for the protection of Darfurian civilians by strengthening the African Union force in Darfur through a broadened Chapter 7 UN mandate and deployment of a supplemental UN force.

The bill was attached to the Emergency Supplemental which passed the Senate in late April, and was awaiting approval in conference

committee. If accepted the bill would have represented a major step forward in bringing peace and security to the people of Darfur. However, the Administration made clear its opposition to the bill, and it was subsequently deleted from the final Emergency Supplemental Conference Report agreed to this week. With the Darfur Accountability Act off the table, what will the Administration do now regarding Darfur?

Financial assistance is not enough—there needs to be real political action. Though the Darfur Accountability Act was not passed, most of its provisions called for action at the Executive level. Thus, the Administration still has an opportunity to become effectively engaged on the Darfur issue. Most of the solutions to the Darfur crisis will entail a multi-lateral effort, so the President must become more involved in eliciting a response from the international community.

Though several UN Security Council resolutions have been passed to date, the UN has yet to agree on a comprehensive Security Council resolution which would cease the transgressions of the Sudanese government and its Janjaweed militia, and provide adequate protection for Darfurian civilians. The African Union will not be able to handle the situation in Darfur on their own. They need the troops, mandate, and logistical resources to effectively protect civilians dispersed across an area the size of Texas.

The Administration can bring this about; they need only increase their engagement. To that end the US must provide more leadership in the United Nations, especially the Security Council, to get a comprehensive resolution passed. It also needs to be especially forceful with China and Russia, who have been a major hindrance to achieving progress on the Darfur issue. The Administration must also sustain pressure on the Sudanese regime. We can not turn a blind eye to their transgressions in Darfur, simply because they are now cooperative with us on intelligence matters. Not only is that short-sighted, it is morally wrong.

In the cases of the Holocaust and Rwanda, inaction on the part of the international community allowed the mass murder of millions of innocent people. Now we find ourselves on the brink of a similarly momentous error. Once again, politics and national interests are delaying the type of action needed to make a significant impact on the Darfur Crisis.

During the observation of the Auschwitz anniversary in February 2005, Dr Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of Great Britain, wisely commented that "We can't bring the dead back to life, but we can fight for the sanctity of life." It is my hope that we take up the fight to which Rabbi Sacks refers: Unlike the Holocaust and Rwanda, the final story of Darfur has yet to be written. We still have the chance, however faint, to prevent the triumph of evil. Mr. President, we must do more for Darfur. If we choose not to act, history will forever echo our failure, and our consciences will forever hold our shame.

[From the New York Times, May 3, 2005]

DAY 113 OF THE PRESIDENT'S SILENCE

(By Nicholas D. Kristof)

Finally, finally, finally, President Bush is showing a little muscle on the issue of genocide in Darfur. Is the muscle being used to stop the genocide of hundreds of thousands of villagers? No, tragically, it's to stop Congress from taking action.

Incredibly, the Bush administration is fighting to kill the Darfur Accountability Act, which would be the most forceful step the U.S. has taken so far against the genocide. The bill, passed by the Senate, calls for such steps as freezing assets of the genocide's leaders and imposing an internationally backed no-fly zone to stop Sudan's Army from strafing villages.

The White House was roused from its stupor of indifference on Darfur to send a letter, a copy of which I have in my hand, to Congressional leaders, instructing them to delete provisions about Darfur from the legislation.

Mr. Bush might reflect on a saying of President Kennedy: "The hottest places in hell are reserved for those who in a period of moral crisis maintain their neutrality."

Aside from the effort to block Congressional action, there are other signs that the administration is trying to backtrack on Darfur. The first sign came when Condoleezza Rice gave an interview to The Washington Post in which she deflected questions about Darfur and low-balled the number of African Union troops needed there.

Then, in Sudan, Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick pointedly refused to repeat the administration's past judgment that the killings amount to genocide. Mr. Zoellick also cited an absurdly low estimate of Darfur's total death toll: 60,000 to 160,000. Every other serious estimate is many times as high. The latest, from the Coalition for International Justice, is nearly 400,000, and rising by 500 a day.

This is not a partisan issue, for Republicans and the Christian right led the way in blowing the whistle on the slaughter in Darfur. As a result, long before Democrats had staggered to their feet on the issue, Mr. Bush was telephoning Sudan's leader and pressing for a ceasefire there.

Later, Mr. Bush forthrightly called the slaughter genocide, and he has continued to back the crucial step of a larger African Union force to provide security. Just the baby steps Mr. Bush has taken have probably saved hundreds of thousands of lives.

So why is Mr. Bush so reluctant to do a bit more and save perhaps several hundred thousand more lives? I sense that there are three reasons.

First, Mr. Bush doesn't see any neat solution, and he's mindful that his father went into Somalia for humanitarian reasons and ended up with a mess.

Second, Mr. Bush is very proud—justly—that he helped secure peace in a separate war between northern and southern Sudan. That peace is very fragile, and he is concerned that pressuring Sudan on Darfur might disrupt that peace while doing little more than emboldening the Darfur rebels (some of them cutthroats who aren't negotiating seriously).

Third, Sudan's leaders have increased their cooperation with the C.I.A. As The Los Angeles Times reported, the C.I.A. recently flew Sudan's intelligence chief to Washington for consultations about the war on terror, and the White House doesn't want to jeopardize that channel.

All three concerns are legitimate. But when historians look back on his presidency, they are going to focus on Mr. Bush's fiddling as hundreds of thousands of people were killed, raped or mutilated in Darfur—and if the situation worsens, the final toll could reach a million dead.

This Thursday marks Holocaust Remembrance Day. The best memorial would be for more Americans to protest about this administration's showing the same lack of interest in Darfur that F.D.R. showed toward the genocide of Jews. Ultimately, public pressure may force Mr. Bush to respond to

Darfur, but it looks as if he will have to be dragged kicking and screaming by Republicans and Democrats alike.

Granted, Darfur defies easy solutions. But Mr. Bush was outspoken and active this spring in another complex case, that of Terry Schiavo. If only Mr. Bush would exert himself as much to try to save the lives of the two million people driven from their homes in Darfur. So I'm going to start tracking Mr. Bush's lassitude. The last time Mr. Bush let the word Darfur slip past his lips publicly (to offer a passing compliment to U.S. aid workers, rather than to denounce the killings) was Jan. 10. So today marks Day 113 of Mr. Bush's silence about the genocide unfolding on his watch.

INTRODUCTION OF THE BREASTFEEDING PROMOTION ACT

HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2005

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, I rise to introduce the Breastfeeding Promotion Act with my colleagues CHRIS SHAYS of Connecticut, ROBERT WEXLER of Florida, ADAM SCHIFF, LYNN WOOLSEY and LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD of California, BERNARD SANDERS of Vermont, BRAD MILLER of North Carolina, DONALD PAYNE of New Jersey, SHEILA JACKSON-LEE of Texas, JOHN CONYERS and DALE KILDEE from Michigan and MAJOR OWENS and JOSEPH CROWLEY from New York.

Mr. Speaker, statistical surveys of families show that over 50 percent of mothers with children less than one year of age are in the labor force. Whereas women with infants and toddlers are a rapidly growing segment of the labor force today, arrangements must be made to allow a mother's expressing of milk if mother and child must separate.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that mothers breastfeed exclusively for six months but continuing for at least the first year of a child's life. Research studies show that children who are not breastfed have higher rates of mortality, meningitis, some types of cancers, asthma and other respiratory illnesses, bacterial and viral infections, diarrhoeal diseases, ear infections, allergies, and obesity. To encourage and promote breastfeeding we are introducing the Breastfeeding Promotion Act.

Specifically, the Breastfeeding Promotion Act includes four provisions:

Protects Breastfeeding Under Civil Rights Law: The bill clarifies the Pregnancy Discrimination Act of 1978 to protect breastfeeding under civil rights law. This will ensure that women cannot be fired or discriminated against in the workplace for expressing milk or breastfeeding during lunch or breaks.

Provides Tax Incentives for Employers: With more than half of mothers with infants (less than one year of age) in the work force, it is important to promote a mother-friendly work environment. The bill encourages employers to set up a safe, private, and sanitary environment for women to express (or pump) breast milk by providing a tax credit for employers who set up a lactation location, purchase or rent lactation-related equipment, hire a lactation consultant or otherwise promote a lactation-friendly work environment. Many companies would be able to receive a tax credit of up to fifty percent of their related expenses.

Seeks Minimum Safety Standards for Breast Pumps: The bill requires the Food and Drug Administration to develop minimum quality standards for breast pumps to ensure that products on the market are safe and effective based on efficiency, effectiveness, and sanitation factors (in addition to providing full and complete information concerning breast pump equipment).

Allows Breastfeeding Equipment to Be Tax Deductible: The bill amends the tax laws to include breastfeeding equipment and services as deductible medical care expenses.

I ask all of my colleagues to support this important legislation.

VOCATIONAL AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION FOR THE FUTURE ACT

SPEECH OF

HON. JAMES R. LANGEVIN

OF RHODE ISLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, May 4, 2005

The House in Committee of the Whole House on the State of the Union had under consideration the bill (H.R. 366) to amend the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act of 1998 to strengthen and improve programs under that Act:

Mr. LANGEVIN. Mr. Chairman, I rise in support of H.R. 366, the Vocational and Technical Education for the Future Act, which reauthorizes the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Technical Education Act. For over 20 years, the programs authorized in this bill have offered students across America the opportunity to develop their academic and technical skills.

Perkins supports vocational education programs that prepare students for both postsecondary education and the careers of their choice. H.R. 366 maintains many of the aspects of the current legislation that have made these programs successful. In my home state of Rhode Island, federal funding is instrumental in the operations of nine regional centers, each offering a different mix of technical training programs. Additional career and technical programs are provided in numerous comprehensive high schools and at post-secondary institutions throughout the state. These services are an integral component of education in Rhode Island and I strongly support a continued federal role in career and technical education.

The bill we are voting on today incorporates several new "local uses of funds" that will help postsecondary programs serve their students better—particularly adults that take the initiative to return to school, enrolling in community college career and technical education programs.

I want to take this opportunity to express one reservation about the reauthorization. The merger of the Tech Prep program into the Basic State Grants will result in the loss of a separate line item for Tech Prep. Although the bill seeks to ensure continued funding for Tech Prep activities, community colleges fear that the end result will be the loss of those funds, rather than an addition to the Basic State Grants. Tech Prep programs utilize a proven, successful school-to-work transition strategy to assist students making the connection between school and employment. I hope that a dedicated funding stream for Tech Prep will be reinstated in the conference on this bill with the Senate.

With this in mind, I thank the House leadership for pursuing the reauthorization of the Perkins Act and encourage my colleagues to vote in favor of H.R. 366.

HONORING THE LIFE OF BECKY ZERLENTES

HON. MARILYN N. MUSGRAVE

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2005

Mrs. MUSGRAVE. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life of Becky Zerlentes who died, tragically, on Sunday, April 3, 2005 after a fatal blow from a boxing match the day before.

Becky was a well-loved member of the Fort Collins community; she was a geography and economics instructor at Front Range Community College. She taught swimming and had a black belt in Goshin Jitsu, and she had brown belts in other forms of martial arts.

In 2002, Becky won the Regional Golden Gloves in women's boxing. She took a short break and recently began to box again. Becky was knocked unconscious during a match, and never regained consciousness. She died the following day at the Denver Health Medical Center.

I ask my colleagues to extend their sympathies to Becky's family, including her husband, Stephan Weiler, and the Fort Collins community. Becky has touched the lives of many at Front Range and beyond.

A TRIBUTE TO PHIL FRIEDMAN AND COMPUTER GENERATE SOLUTIONS

HON. TOM LANTOS

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Thursday, May 5, 2005

Mr. LANTOS. Mr. Speaker, on May 5, 2005 thirty years to the day after he arrived on this country's shore, Phil Friedman will once again cast his gaze on the awesome spectacle of the Statue of Liberty as so many other immigrants before and after him have done.

But this time, he will be seeing that spectacular symbol of America's promise from his new office, as the successful company that he founded two decades ago celebrates its move from Broadway to Lower Manhattan.

Phil's story is a singularly American one that would have done Horatio Alger proud. It can inspire other people who are U.S. citizens by choice, such as me and my wife, as well as anyone who understands what the American dream is about.

Phil Friedman came of age in the Soviet Union, where he was trained in electronic engineering, accounting and finance before fleeing the oppressive Soviet system. After surmounting the challenge of emigrating, he found that life in America as a new arrival was no walk in the park—in order to succeed, he needed a better facility in English, and even more professional credentials. So he went back to school while his wife, Rose, studied accounting. After earning multiple degrees from New York University, he spent eight years in various positions in the information technology industry—first as a programmer,